United Nations A/59/PV.38

General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

38th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 56

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.1)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.6)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

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(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

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Draft resolution (A/59/L.3)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

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(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.5)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

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(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/297)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.8)

(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

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(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.11)

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/296)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.7)

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Wolfgang Hoffman, to present the report of the Preparatory Commission.

Mr. Hoffmann (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I am pleased to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The total banning of any nuclear explosion in any environment will help to end the development of ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons, as well as arrest the proliferation of those weapons, at a time when concerns about vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons are at the fore of the international and peace and security debate.

Since its adoption, the Treaty has been signed by a total of 173 States and has been ratified by 119, including 33 of the 44 States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force. I am pleased to note that since October 2003 four States have signed the Treaty — Eritrea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania — and 14 States have ratified it — Bahrain, Belize, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania. One of the ratifying States, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is also an annex 2 State.

The increasing number of States committing themselves to a complete ban on nuclear explosions should not lead to complacency. Eleven States whose ratification is necessary for the entry to force of the Treaty have not yet ratified, for various reasons. I am therefore particularly encouraged by the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT initiated by Australia, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands and adopted on 23 September 2004. It is another example of the support of States for bringing about the entry into force of the CTBT; it reinforces the concrete measures to promote signature and ratification of the Treaty that were agreed by the 2003 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT and that are being pursued in the follow-up process to that Conference.

The main activities of the Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat, which started work at the Vienna International Centre in March 1997, have been the establishment of the verification regime stipulated by the CTBT and the promotion of understanding and entry into force of the Treaty.

The global verification regime, which needs to be operational at the Treaty's entry into force to monitor compliance with the comprehensive ban on all nuclear-test explosions, consists of four elements. The International Monitoring System (IMS) and related means of communication, supported by the International Data Centre, will be able to detect evidence of possible nuclear explosions. A consultation and clarification process can clarify and resolve matters concerning possible non-compliance with the Treaty. Each State party will also have the right to request an on-site inspection in order to clarify whether a nuclear-weapon-test explosion or any other nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the Treaty and to gather facts that might assist in identifying any possible violators. Finally, confidence-building measures will contribute to resolving compliance concerns arising from possible misinterpretation of verification data, thereby assisting in the calibration of IMS stations.

The establishment of the International Monitoring System — a worldwide network comprising 321 seismic radionuclide hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories — is steadily progressing. More than 55 per cent of the stations are now operational, and we are confident that the network can be completed within the next three to four years. The current phase of testing and evaluation of the IMS already shows promising results. The system already provides for global coverage; attaining the strict standards for verification after the entry into force of the Treaty will, however, require further work.

International Monitoring System stations are transmitting raw data to the International Data Centre (IDC) in Vienna through a satellite-based global communications infrastructure that also connects the International Data Centre with States' national data centres. From the IDC both data and the resulting analysis bulletins are distributed to national data centres. To date, 82 States have established national data centres.

On-site inspection, as provided for in the Treaty, is a final verification measure, and the development of the draft on-site inspection operation manual is a key task of the Preparatory Commission in this area.

The credibility of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements frequently hinges on the credibility of the verification systems associated with them. International verification efforts have been heavily, and sometimes unfairly, criticized for not living up to the high standards required to accomplish their job. In retrospect, however, it was found that those international verification efforts were not only working properly, but also provided impartial and untainted information on the basis of which the international community could take its political decisions.

Verification of international agreements is a difficult, slow and costly enterprise. I would like to thank all States that are supporting the strengthening of our verification system technically, financially and politically and promise that we will do our utmost to live up to the high expectations for our monitoring capabilities.

The primary purpose of the CTBT is to ensure an end to nuclear-test explosions globally, thus enhancing national and international security. However, the CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional benefits derived from the IMS data and the activities of the International Data Centre. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound data can be used in studies of the Earth's structure and for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, tsunami warnings, underwater explosion location and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. Infrasound data can assist in minimizing the effect of volcanic operations on civil aviation and can be used for

atmospheric and meteorological studies. The IMS radionuclide network offers opportunities for detecting radionuclide dispersion, monitoring radiation levels, studying natural radioactivity, biological research and environmental change investigations.

The Preparatory Commission continues to organize training programmes and workshops to support the enhancement of the national capabilities of States signatories in the implementation of the Treaty. Those include training courses for IMS station operators for national data centre managers and technical staff on data analysis, storage and management, on the global communications infrastructure and on on-site inspection technologies.

In the field of international cooperation, the Provisional Technical Secretariat continues its role as an information clearing house and provides support for the advancement of the Commission's work, including information visit programmes to support IMS and IDC activities.

Voluntary contributions from member States have been received to support those activities. In 2004, an international cooperation workshop for States from Northern Africa took place in Tunis from 29 November to 1 December, and an international cooperation workshop for States from Southern Africa will be held in Pretoria. Such workshops help identify a range of measures to enhance support for and further participation in the work of the Commission, as well as advance national implementation of the Treaty.

Following the adoption by the General Assembly on 15 June 2000 of the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission (resolution 54/280, annex), our relations and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies have intensified. Cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, including the three regional centres, is of particular importance to the Commission, and I would like use this opportunity to thank the Department for its dedicated work. A service agreement with the Commission concluded with the United Nations Development Programme provides us with operational support. The World Meteorological Organization is receiving data from the Monitoring System for research purposes. Potential fields for cooperation are being explored with other organizations of the United Nations system.

The CTBT was assigned a special role in the disarmament-related chapter of the Millennium Declaration, and, within its limited possibilities, the Commission is supporting States in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Millennium Declaration. The five-year review, scheduled for fall 2005, will provide an opportunity to discuss further action in this respect. Depending on the wishes of the ratifying States of the CTBT, the next conference on article XIV could coincide with the General Assembly's deliberations on the Millennium Declaration; both processes could benefit from such proximity. In order to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family, including the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Preparatory Commission has requested full membership in the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination. This would not only allow for a strengthened cooperation and synergy; it would also provide that body with essential expertise in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that eight years of developments since the CTBT's opening for signature have confirmed the international community's growing support for it and its recognition of the Treaty as an important instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. By signing and ratifying the CTBT, States confirm their commitment to these shared goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, who will present the report of that Organization.

Mr. Pfirter (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this Assembly. You represent a country, Gabon, and a continent, Africa, that are called upon to play a central role in the definition of a more just, united and, above all, peaceful world. I welcome the opportunity granted to me to speak this morning under your presidency.

(*spoke in English*)

Two years ago, I addressed the General Assembly for the first time following my appointment as Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The intervening period has been an eventful

one for the OPCW and for the Chemical Weapons Convention. On that occasion, two years ago, I came here to outline some of my priorities and to discuss the challenges ahead. Today, I intend to give an overview of what we have been able to achieve in the past two years, but I will also discuss the many challenges that remain on our agenda.

In 2002, the OPCW comprised 146 member States, and was verifying the destruction of chemical weapons and related facilities in four possessor States. Today, the number of Member States has grown to 167, and our verification activities extend to two more possessor States — the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Albania — that have declared chemical weapons stockpiles.

Two years ago, I spoke about the preparations we were making for our First Review Conference, and how we expected it to assess the first years of operation of the Convention and, most important, to give us guidance for the future. Today, I can report to this General Assembly that the objectives of that important Conference were successfully fulfilled. Member States agreed on and unequivocally reaffirmed the validity and the crucial importance of the Convention and, with an eye to the future, approved two important action plans: one on the implementation of article VII of the Convention, and another on the universality of the Convention. Through these initiatives, States parties rightly focused on two areas that require the most urgent attention. We have been working hard on both.

With regard to universality, we have, as I mentioned, increased our membership by 21, with each region of the globe contributing new States parties. Particularly encouraging are the accessions or ratifications by a good number of African and Asia-Pacific countries. It gives me particular pleasure to congratulate the Republic of Madagascar, which deposited its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General yesterday.

However, as we move forward towards universal participation in the Convention, there is no room for complacency, since a few important countries still remain outside the realm of the chemical weapons ban. While in most of those cases we are confident that progress is being made and that a good number of non-signatory and signatory States will join the Convention in the near future, some areas of concern still remain, which are marked by conflict or tension where linkage and conditionality still prevail. The Middle East and the Korean peninsula are two cases in point.

As I have indicated on numerous occasions, when it comes to promoting the proscription of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot accept the logic of impotence and immobility. While we respect the concerns and the legitimate priorities of those who must live in areas marked by mistrust and sometimes by violence, we must at the same time emphasize with vigour and determination our conviction that nothing can justify retaining the use of chemical weapons as an option. Two weeks ago, in my address to the First Committee of the General Assembly, I recalled that chemical weapons have been forever banned the world over — with no exceptions, and no ifs, ands, or buts. The Convention, a multilateral treaty negotiated under the aegis of the United Nations, bans weapons that can be used effectively only against unprotected civilians.

Today, I ask the same question I posed at the meeting of the First Committee on 7 October: what could possibly justify refraining from joining this treaty? In this context, I think it is appropriate to mention the case of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which had developed and manufactured weapons of mass destruction and which has now taken the courageous decision to get rid of them. As we speak, OPCW inspectors are verifying the destruction of those arsenals, which thus no longer threaten the security of North Africa and the Middle East. I wish to praise the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for its courageous decision to join the overwhelming majority of nations under the chemical weapons ban, and for the exemplary manner in which it has been observing its obligations under the Convention.

Just a few days ago in The Hague, our Executive Council approved a recommendation to make a technical change to the Convention extending the deadline for conversion of some former chemical weapons production facilities for new member States. Hopefully, once our Conference of States Parties approves the change next month, it will allow for the conversion of two facilities in Rabta, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which, after having been used in the past to manufacture weapons of mass destruction, will now produce medicine for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases. Those medications will be made available at low cost in Africa. This example thus shows how, within the parameters of the Convention,

there is an opportunity for new member States to turn their capacities away from the pursuit of nefarious purposes and towards the pursuit of the common weal.

The other crucial area that the Review Conference mandated us to work on with a renewed sense of urgency is national implementation of the Convention. Here, some progress is being made in terms of the elaboration of domestic legislation and the establishment of the national authorities required to make the Convention effective, but much more remains to be done. According to our estimates, roughly 40 per cent of our States parties have legislation in place that can be considered comprehensive and adequate in terms of the Convention.

Many countries are still grappling with bureaucratic or financial obstacles, which must be overcome as soon as possible. The action plan sets the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties in 2005 as a deadline for taking stock of the situation and determining the way ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all States Members of the United Nations that are also parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that we are ready to assist them, on request, with any practical aspect of implementation.

Peace and security are inextricably linked, as are the bodies mandated to strive for them. Our work at the OPCW, although independent of that of the United Nations, is inseparably linked from the wider efforts of the international community in this regard.

This is why the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1373 (2001) on terrorism and of resolution 1540 (2004) on preventing non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction is also important to the goals of the Convention. We have indicated to the newly appointed Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and to the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) that we are ready and willing to extend any technical assistance, information and advice that are required to prevent the ominous possibility of terrorist groups gaining access to weapons of mass destruction or related materials — in our case, chemical-warfare agents.

This new dimension of our work is underpinned by the usual cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations, in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs, within the framework of the Relationship Agreement between the two organizations. We are determined to strengthen and deepen this cooperation within the mandates of the United Nations and the OPCW — mandates that will clearly present many areas of convergence as the international context changes and as responses are needed to deal with the new challenges that are confronting us.

I would like to close with a brief overview of the OPCW's main activities. As I said earlier, in the verification area the number and range of our tasks have increased over the past two years, with 21 additional States joining the Convention, including two possessor States, Libya and Albania. We have begun verifying the destruction of Libya's chemical weapons stockpiles, and we will soon begin verifying the destruction and conversion of its production facilities, once the relevant plans are approved by our policy-making organs.

In Albania, the small arsenal that was discovered will be disposed of in the near future. The United States of America is continuing its destruction campaign at a faster pace, with the addition of one new destruction facility in Umatilla and two others that will begin operating in the next few months. The Russian Federation, which has the largest stockpile, is also moving ahead, and we expect at least two more destruction facilities to go on line there within the next year or so. We look forward to new impetus and progress with regard to the Russian destruction programme as the inflexible deadlines of the Convention approach.

India has set an example, having to date destroyed more than is required by the deadlines set out in the Convention, while another State party is also making steady progress.

Industry verification is becoming increasingly important at a time when there are serious concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Keeping in mind the high priority to be accorded to the most dangerous facilities, the chemical industry must be inspected if the Convention is to retain its deterrent value. We are very active on this front, counting on the unstinting support of member States and industrial associations the world over. Such associations want their activities validated as legitimate by the OPCW's verification regime.

International cooperation and assistance in the peaceful uses of chemistry continue to go hand in hand with disarmament and non-proliferation. That is

another crucial factor in the equation of the Convention.

We continue to give support to developing nations through a variety of programmes aimed at reinforcing technical capacities and skills and, to the extent possible, providing support to laboratories at selected institutions. Through initiatives like our Associate Programme and with the full support of the chemical industry, we train and support experts from developing nations in the peaceful uses of chemistry. Similarly, in the area of assistance and protection against the threat or use of chemical weapons, we provide training to, and foster capacity-building in, our member States. In recent months we have been able to respond positively to numerous requests, especially from countries in the Gulf region, where we have provided technical support to help our member States improve or develop their protective capacities in a region where chemical weapons are a real concern.

In closing, let me say how honoured I am to have had this opportunity to report to the highest body of the United Nations on the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in pursuit of the noble goal of contributing to international peace and security through disarmament and non-proliferation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.1.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): It is my pleasure, as the current Chairman of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), to introduce the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization".

It was a matter of pride for AALCO and its member States that the General Assembly accorded the organization permanent observer status in 1980. A programme of cooperation was then established, pursuant to resolution 36/38 of 18 November 1981. Since then, AALCO has enjoyed meaningful and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations. The organization has had as many as 16 cooperative arrangements with the United Nations, its agencies and other intergovernmental organizations.

My country, Indonesia, had the honour of hosting, in Bali in June this year, the forty-third annual session of AALCO. During the session we discussed 16 items, with the objective of contributing to the progressive development of international law. Among those issues were the transnational crime of trafficking in women and children, corruption, the deportation of Palestinians, the jurisdictional immunities of States and their property, the extraterritorial application of national legislation and expressions of folklore and its international protection. A one-day special meeting was also organized on 23 June 2004 on the agenda item entitled "Establishing cooperation against trafficking in women and children".

The broad range of legal issues discussed during the session reflects the role of the AALCO in the promotion and codification of international law. That is consistent with the role that the organization has played since its inception in 1956 in fostering the common interest of Asian and African States on the promotion of international law.

I should also like to recall that Indonesia had the privilege of hosting the historic Bandung 1955 Conference of the Asian-African States. AALCO was established a year later, in 1956, as an important outcome of that Conference. When the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference was commemorated in 1980, AALCO also convened its twenty-first session in Indonesia.

In this regard, the convening of the AALCO Conference last year and the forthcoming Asia-Africa Summit to be held in conjunction with the golden jubilee of the Bandung Conference of 1955, to be held in Indonesia in April next year, provide important momentum for Asian and African countries. The Asian-African Summit in 2005 is expected to adopt a new strategic partnership between Asia and Africa and thereby to reinvigorate the important contributions of the Asian-African Conference of 1955 to the promotion of a just and equitable world order.

Next month, November 2005, marks a decade since the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the most comprehensive legal framework on ocean affairs. The marathon negotiation process on that subject witnessed great contributions by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) in the shaping of international law. Given recent developments in ocean affairs, the law of the sea remains an important item on the AALCO agenda as reflected in the activities of its forty-third session.

However, the issue of the law of the sea constitutes only one area where the AALCO has been actively involved in the lawmaking process in the United Nations. Within the United Nations, the impact of the AALCO has also been felt in areas ranging from international trade law and environmental law to the promotion of human rights and the battle against corruption. A detailed account of the activities of AALCO during the biennium 2002-2004 can be found in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/59/303. The report reviews the activities of the AALCO, focusing on its relations with the United Nations system. The Secretary-General of the AALCO, in his statement later in the current session of the General Assembly, will deal with the highlights of the activities of the AALCO during the past two years.

AALCO is committed to continuing its close and effective cooperation with the United Nations. The continuing efforts of the AALCO towards strengthening the role of the United Nations and its various organs in enhancing the rule of law and wider adherence to related international instruments need to be recognized.

With that objective in view, I would like to place before the Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.1. The draft resolution, as of now, is jointly sponsored by Bangladesh, the People's Republic of China, Cyprus, Egypt, Ghana, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand.

The draft resolution underlines the importance of enhancing existing cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCO in the codification of international law. It also acknowledges the important relationships between the AALCO and the United Nations and its agencies and other intergovernmental organizations with a view to promoting cooperation in the field of international law among States in the Asian and African regions.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the contribution of the AALCO to the promotion of international law will enhance the goals of the United Nations. Draft resolution A/59/L.1 serves to provide a wider opportunity to achieve this objective. I urge the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, in support of this fruitful cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Tajikistan to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.3.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): It is a great honour for me, as the representative of the country currently chairing the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), to address the United Nations General Assembly on agenda item 56 (b) entitled, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". Recently, we have witnessed enhanced partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations in achieving common goals of peace, stability and development. Much attention is devoted to that issue by the Secretary-General, by whose initiative regular meetings of leading regional organizations are convened at United Nations Headquarters. It is important to note that at such meetings, participants not only exchange experience gained in various spheres of activity, but also identify new issues that can be dealt with through cooperation with the United Nations — while keeping in mind the specific characteristics and advantages of particular regional organizations.

The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303) provides an impressive picture of United Nations interactions with a whole spectrum of regional organizations. One of them is the Economic Cooperation Organization, which comprises 10 States: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

The Economic Cooperation Organization is among those regional organizations that consider the integration of their member States into the world economy and participation in the process of globalization to be among their main goals. Possessing considerable human and natural resources, the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization have made significant progress in this area.

The situation in Afghanistan, which has dramatically changed over the past two years, provides new opportunities for the organization to develop. We believe that we can achieve further progress by improving interaction and coordination of our own efforts with those of other international organizations, first and foremost with the United Nations, cooperation with which is of priority importance to ECO member

States. That idea was once again emphasized at the eighth meeting of ECO leaders, held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, in September 2004.

We note with satisfaction that the interaction between various organizations of the United Nations system and the ECO has been gaining momentum over the past two years. Here, let me mention in particular cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The interaction between ESCAP and the ECO embraces a broad range of economic and social issues faced by the 300 million people who reside within our States. The ECO is a part of the consultative mechanism of ESCAP consultative meetings. From our viewpoint, it is most important to develop cooperation on such issues as macroeconomic policy, trade and investments, transportation and environmental protection. Formulation of a regional intergovernmental agreement on the Asian Highway network was an important milestone.

Cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) within the context of a specific programme for the economies of Central Asia is gaining momentum. The memorandum of understanding signed by ECO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on 24 June 2003 envisages large prospects for cooperation between ECO and the Commission. There is an entire list of agreed areas for cooperation between the two organizations, including transport and trade, industry and entrepreneurship, stable development of energy, environmental protection, economic analysis, statistics and others.

Our hope is that the ties of cooperation between ECO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and between ECO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will expand. We express our satisfaction with the current interaction with the International Trade Centre of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization and with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). We attach great importance to the cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Our view is that the interaction between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is not being used to its fullest capacity. The ECO counts on expanding the existing framework of cooperation in the common struggle against the world narcotics problem.

In 2005, ECO will be celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its establishment. For more than half of that time, ECO has cooperated closely with the United Nations as an Observer. Further promotion and development of the cooperation between the United Nations and ECO will serve, not only to rationalize economic ties among the countries of the region, but also to optimize their trade relationship with the rest of the world.

On behalf of the ECO member States, I have the honour to submit, for the consideration of the General Assembly, draft resolution A/59/L.3 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". The draft resolution reflects the level of interaction reached by the two organizations over the past two years.

The sponsors of the draft resolution call on United Nations Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Chile, who will present draft resolution A/59/L.5.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", in document A/59/L.5.

The draft resolution enjoys broad support among many delegations from all regions of the world. I am pleased to report that the draft has 78 sponsors.

After the circulation of the first draft on 15 October, we received contributions and proposed amendments from some countries. As a result of consultations, I have the pleasure to introduce a text that was revised in light of those proposals. It will be distributed tomorrow in all official languages.

The draft resolution that I have the honour to introduce is highly important to the Organization. It is the outcome of several years of joint work in the United Nations by its Member States and the Inter-Parliamentary

Union (IPU), together with many national parliaments, towards strengthening the contribution that this sector can make to multilateral cooperation.

The scope and quality of such cooperation have been described in detail in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303). In his report, the Secretary-General welcomes the close substantive relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a relationship that is constantly growing and developing, particularly since IPU received Observer status in the General Assembly two years ago.

In recognition of the contribution of IPU towards achieving the goals and purposes of the international community, the Secretary-General has also welcomed the decision to hold the second Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in 2005, which will focus on the contribution that parliaments can make towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In subsequent consultations, the Secretary-General and many Member States have expressed particular interest in having this high-level conference take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York as a joint meeting between the United Nations and IPU on the eve of the high-level event planned for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

We are living at a time of great change, which implies a significant evolution of international relations and which means that our peoples and international organizations must work more closely together. That also creates the necessity for the national parliaments to contribute to international cooperation, as a basic element of any democratic State.

Thus, the national parliaments bear the constitutional responsibility of representing their peoples. Moreover, they play an important role in translating United Nations agreements into effective national policy.

For that reason, in the Millennium Declaration, our Heads of States and Governments decided to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments, working through the IPU. That cooperation has become increasingly relevant in light of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, more than 200 legislators from throughout the world, met here at United Nations Headquarters to consider the topic of disarmament for lasting peace: defining the role of the parliamentarian. Availing themselves of the opportunity for a substantive exchange of views and ideas, parliamentarians, senior officials of the United Nations and Permanent Representatives of diplomatic missions discussed topics related to strengthening international regimes on arms control and disarmament, the needs and objectives of peacekeeping with an integrated focus on peacebuilding.

Not only did they reach a better understanding of those complex processes, but they also made a commitment to play a more active role in supporting international goals and objectives.

We trust, as do many other delegations in this Hall, that we are correct in sending a clear message that will encourage increased cooperation between the United Nations and IPU.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/59/L.5 express the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, who will be speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and will introduce draft resolution A/59/L.6.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I have the honour, on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.6, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations". May I thank all the other sponsors, namely, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Gabon, Guinea, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Timor-Leste, United States

of America and Yemen for their support to this draft resolution.

Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations has been pursued for many decades. That cooperation began soon after the establishment of ASEAN in 1967, largely through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which formally became a special dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1977 and is the only United Nations agency accorded dialogue partner status in ASEAN so far.

Nevertheless, in addition to the ASEAN-UNDP dialogue partnership, several other United Nations agencies have also been engaged in cooperation in various areas such as poverty eradication, human resource development, good governance, disaster prevention, environment and sustainable development, science and technology, health and disease prevention, protection of women and children, peacebuilding and so on.

General Assembly resolution 57/35 of 21 November 2002 on cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN represented a new milestone in that cooperation. It sought to generate additional impetus to the existing cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN.

Allow me to highlight some areas of fruitful cooperation that deserve to be mentioned: in the field of social development, UNAIDS has rendered beneficial assistance to ASEAN. It helps with funding for a series of workshops and provides technical experts to work with ASEAN in implementing its regional programme on HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

Concerning health issues, a four-year memorandum of understanding between ASEAN and the World Health Organization (WHO) focusing on communicable and non-communicable diseases, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, food safety and new emerging diseases was concluded in 1997. Upon its expiration, the sixth ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting, held in March 2002, agreed to extend it for another five years. Its fruitful implementation was clearly demonstrated when the ASEAN+3 group of countries in cooperation with WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), had to act promptly on the prevention and control of the deadly severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic.

In the area of trade and economic cooperation, a number of regional seminars on World Trade Organization-related matters, focusing on capacity-building for ASEAN member countries in multilateral trade negotiations, have been organized jointly by the United Nations and ASEAN.

Peace and security cooperation is also a dimension that has been enhanced — the project "Towards a Culture of Peace" has been launched and carried out. The Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone, part of the cooperation between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has been pursued consistently.

A most commendable effort on both sides to strengthen mutual cooperation has involved annual meetings between Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Secretary-General and ASEAN Foreign Ministers with the presence of the ASEAN Secretary-General.

The last annual meeting was held on 28 September 2004, during the general debate of the current General Assembly session, when the two parties were able to exchange views on issues of common interest and agree to hold the second United Nations-ASEAN Summit in 2005, during the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

In late November of this year, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will host the tenth ASEAN Summit and other ASEAN-related summits with ASEAN dialogue partners in Vientiane, our capital city. On that occasion, a number of important documents, including the Vientiane action programme, which will last for the next six years, will be adopted, with the objective of accelerating regional integration leading towards the establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2020.

Like other regional groups, ASEAN is making headway towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), although the progress remains uneven, as indicated in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the work of the Organization presented to the present session of the General Assembly. We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General's recommendation that achieving the MDGs

> "will be possible only if developed and developing countries institute the right combination of national and international policies and implement their

shared commitments, as set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus." (*A/59/1, para. 117*)

We also believe that strengthened cooperation between regional organizations such as ASEAN with the United Nations will contribute significantly to the attainment of internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs. For that reason, the adoption of the draft resolution now being presented would be of great benefit to both the United Nations and ASEAN.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, who will introduce draft resolution A/59/L.7.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): In its capacity as Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Japan, together with the other sponsors, has the honour and pleasure to introduce to the Assembly for adoption the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.7, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization".

The draft resolution is primarily of a procedural nature and is meant to serve as a basis for the CTBTO to inform the General Assembly of its activities during the latter's sixty-first session. In its preambular part, the draft resolution takes note of both the note of the Secretary-General on the cooperation between the two organizations and the report of the Executive Secretary of the Commission. In its operative paragraph, it decides to include the same sub-item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-first session.

Since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Australia, Portugal, Spain, Russian Federation, Malta, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Bangladesh, Turkey, Germany and Romania. It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by the General Assembly with the broadest support possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly touch upon the subject of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations. We believe that in addressing regional issues, it is essential to ensure ownership by the countries in the region and their regional organizations. We are happy to note that such ownership has been demonstrated by, for example, the African Union and African subregional organizations in their efforts to address regional conflicts in recent years. Japan commends, in particular, the role the African Union played in Burundi, and more recently in Darfur, in the Sudan.

We believe that the assistance of the international community and the United Nations will be more effective if it is conducted on the basis of the ownership by the region. Japan, for its part, will continue to support African Union activities contributing to peace, for example, activities relating to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement in the Great Lakes region.

As the African Union Peace and Security Council has embarked on its activities and as needs for peace support operations have grown in Africa over the past several years, cooperation between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations has become more critical than ever.

We are pleased that, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), the United Nations Secretariat assisted the African Union with planning and assessments for the expansion of its monitoring mission in Darfur and demonstrated how the United Nations and a regional organization may cooperate with each other effectively. Japan expects that, through cooperation with the United Nations, the African Union monitoring mission will be expanded expeditiously to improve the security conditions on the ground.

My second point concerns the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). My delegation would like to commend the President of the organization's forty-third session and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for successfully hosting the very productive annual meeting of AALCO in Bali last June.

AALCO is a truly unique regional organization. It promotes legal cooperation among countries in the region; develops and disseminates expertise in international law by organizing annual meetings, seminars and workshops focusing on current issues in international law under consideration in various forums of the United Nations and other bodies; and contributes to the process of the codification and development of international law. Japan, as one of the original members of the organization, continues to support those activities and is confident that the work of codifying international law will be greatly advanced

through closer cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations.

Finally, let me say a few words about the draft resolution contained in the document A/59/L.5, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", which was just introduced by the representative of Chile.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), consisting of the parliaments of the majority of the Member States, is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. Through its wide-ranging activities, the IPU has contributed significantly to promoting democracy and enhancing awareness in the general public of the role of the United Nations.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Japan hopes that the IPU will continue to play its important and unique role. Since relations between the United Nations and the IPU are at a critical juncture, my delegation also considers it appropriate, as is stipulated in the draft resolution, that the IPU engage in extensive consultations with parliamentarians in different countries on the recommendations made by the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Netherlands, who will also introduce draft resolution A/59/L.8.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): Under the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", the Netherlands would like to present draft resolution A/59/L.8, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons", on behalf of the sponsors.

Since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Serbia and Montenegro, Cuba, Poland, Bolivia, Romania, Bangladesh, Turkey Greece and Germany.

We believe that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is an important organization that contributes to international peace and security. The OPCW was established in 1997 by the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The organization's mission is to fully and effectively implement the Convention in order to achieve the total elimination and prohibition of chemical weapons. By the end of this month, the OPCW will have 166 States parties.

The organization works actively to promote accession to the Convention by those countries that have not yet done so. The OPCW verifies the actual destruction of existing chemical weapons stockpiles and chemical weapons production facilities. Furthermore, OPCW carries out worldwide inspections in the chemical industries to verify compliance with the Convention and promotes international cooperation for the peaceful uses of chemistry.

I refer further to the substantive statement made on this issue earlier this morning by Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of OPCW.

The OPCW is an independent international organization that cooperates with the United Nations. We would like to reiterate our support for that cooperation by introducing this draft resolution and we would like to express our gratitude to all Member States for their kind consideration of the draft resolution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Samoa, who will introduce draft resolution A/59/L.11.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): As current chair of the Pacific Islands Forum Group countries with missions to the United Nations, namely: Australia, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Samoa, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.11, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", under agenda item 56 on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

On behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members, I would like to acknowledge and express our sincere appreciation to all those countries that have joined the group in co-sponsoring the draft resolution, namely: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belize, Cape Verde, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Grenada, Israel, Mauritius, Peru, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, Timor-Leste and the United States of America.

In addition I would like to announce that since the publication of draft resolution A/59/L.11, the

following countries have kindly joined the sponsors, namely: Iceland, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Lithuania.

We would like, therefore, to invite other Member States to join those countries in co-sponsoring our group's draft resolution, which, as we have just been advised, is already with the United Nations Secretariat and will be circulated later this afternoon.

By this draft resolution, the Pacific Islands Forum and its associated institutions reaffirm their commitment to a partnership of cooperation and friendship with the United Nations and its development partners. We welcome ongoing efforts in the maintenance and strengthening of that partnership in order to foster closer cooperation between the Forum and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. This would include advancing knowledge in key strategic areas related to governance, security, economic growth, trade, sustainable development and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Pacific Island countries.

At their meeting last April in Auckland, New Zealand, our Forum leaders adopted a vision expressing their desire to foster peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity in the region. To give effect to that vision, our leaders endorsed the development of a Pacific plan that would create stronger and deeper links between Pacific countries and identify the sectors where the region could gain the most from sharing resources and aligning policies.

That plan is currently being put together and we will focus on four key issues, namely, economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. We hope that once fully developed, the plan will not only make our existing Forum organizations work together more efficiently, but also provide the overarching framework within which our region will conduct its business with the international community, including the United Nations system.

At this year's Pacific Islands Forum Summit in Samoa, our leaders again noted the dangers to the world and the Pacific region of terrorism, including transnational crime. As a response, the Pacific Islands Forum has strengthened regional cooperation and has emphasized national efforts to promote law enforcement cooperation, rule of law and regional peace and security, including the fight against all types of terrorism, and to implement the core United Nations treaties to combat terrorism, money laundering, transnational crimes and the financing of terrorism.

The Pacific Islands Forum is also committed to collective mechanisms to assist its Member States to recover from national conflicts and crises. The success of those arrangements, with the support of the United Nations, is already evident in the positive results of the regional assistance mission in the Solomon Islands and the progress made in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

We also welcome the readiness of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Forum, to field an inter-agency mission to Nauru in response to that country's expressed wish.

We encourage further cooperation on the issue of capacity-building through regional training programmes and workshops in order to foster awareness and knowledge of human rights treaties, preventive diplomacy, and post-conflict resolution. The continuation of regular consultations between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, including participation at meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum, is equally encouraged.

We urge the United Nations system to continue to work closely with the Pacific Islands Forum to enhance the coordination of United Nations-related activities within our region. That will become increasingly important, as we approach the ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, as well as the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Pacific Islands Forum will continue to support the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to bring the different regional organizations into the family of the United Nations and to strengthen our mutual political will to achieve our common good.

In closing, the Pacific Islands Forum members would like to assure the United Nations of their commitment and express the hope that, through this partnership of cooperation and friendship, we can continue to work cooperatively together to advance our efforts to achieve the effective maintenance of peace and security and sustainable development for our peoples and communities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Turkey, who will introduce draft resolution A/59/L.12.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): As this is the first time I am taking the floor at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Sir, I would like to join preceding speakers before me in congratulating you on your election to the presidency at the current session. I also would like to seize this opportunity to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our full support and cooperation to ensure the successful completion of the work of the fifty-ninth session.

In my capacity as the current Chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) group, I would like to submit to the General Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.12, which is sponsored by Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Togo. The draft resolution has been introduced under agenda item 56 (p): "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference".

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303), which highlights the important exchanges between the United Nations and the OIC, on political, economic, social and humanitarian issues, during the period under review. As emphasized in the report, the particular focus has been on the current situation in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Sudan, as well as on consultations on conflict prevention and the fight against terrorism.

Given the current developments around the globe, those issues undoubtedly underscore the vitality of the cooperation between the two organizations. We are, indeed, pleased, that ways are available to strengthen the mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and consultation between the United Nations and the OIC, and that the general meeting, held in July, facilitated the development of new ideas and projects to deepen the close cooperation that already exists.

I would also like to introduce a revision of the ninth preambular paragraph, regarding the general meeting between the United Nations and the OIC, held in Vienna. The following text should be added at the end of that paragraph:

> "and the fact that these meetings are now being held every two years, with the next one scheduled for the year 2006,".

The draft resolution, which I have the distinct pleasure and honour to submit to the Assembly, is a testament to the continually developing relations, cooperation, mutual support and collaboration between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I hope that through adoption of the draft resolution, the two organizations will further their cooperation on regional and global matters for the benefit of the world community.

Having introduced the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", I would also like to take this opportunity to make a statement in my capacity as the current Chair of the OIC group.

We warmly welcome the report of the Secretary-General pertaining to agenda item 56. We note with particular satisfaction the comprehensive account of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference at a crucial time when the social, religious, cultural and historical traditions of the peoples of the world should serve as sources of inspiration to bridge existing differences.

It is our firm belief that the sense of cooperation and collaboration among peoples could be furthered through close dialogue and common toil among international organizations. The multidimensional nature of current problems and the changed nature of the threats faced by humanity as a whole call for such enhanced institutional interaction.

In a world where local and regional threats can no longer be contained with traditional security measures, the international community must utilize every available resource. With that understanding, we strongly support the enhanced role of regional and international bodies in the attainment of the shared goals of peace, security, stability and prosperity around the globe. The broad geographical representation of the OIC is indicative of the wealth of wisdom and experience it embodies, which fosters such efforts.

We appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General highlighted in his report such aspects of the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC. The level of cooperation between the two bodies is duly reported. As the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Turkey stands ready to deepen the existing levels of cooperation between the two organizations on regional and global matters of concern.

I would now like, in my national capacity, to make a brief statement on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). The BSEC was established in 1992 as an intergovernmental mechanism, with the purpose of establishing a network of cooperation in the economic field among its 11 founding member States.

As the host country of the BSEC headquarters, Turkey welcomes the new BSEC member, Serbia and Montenegro, which recently became the twelfth member of the organization on 16 April 2004. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization was created when cooperation was the element most needed for stability and security in the region. It developed into a full-fledged international organization with the entry into force of its Charter in 1999. Since its inception, BSEC has also been instrumental in its own way, in helping efforts to create greater political stability while not losing sight of its primary objectives in the economic field.

Indeed, the preamble of the charter of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, reaffirms the common will of its member States to adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter, and to share their vision of regional cooperation, as part of the process of integration in Europe and based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, prosperity through economic liberty, social justice and equal security and stability. That process is open for interaction with other countries, regional initiatives and international organizations and financial institutions.

Even though it covers a complicated geographic and geostrategic area, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, with its well-established legal, institutional and procedural framework, sets the pace for cooperation among its members.

Following the mandate given to the organization by the BSEC summit in 2002, it has expanded its activities beyond the traditional areas of regional economic cooperation. With its new mechanisms and instruments, such as the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the Project Development Fund, the organization has been supporting significant progress in such areas of cooperation as trade, banking and finance, transport, energy and electricity networks, science, statistical data, combating organized crime and simplification of cross-border and customs procedures.

We welcome the part of the report of the Secretary-General that deals with cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and that explains the status of that cooperation. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation set out in the report, that the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should continue to hold consultations with BSEC and formulate and implement joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that achieving the Millennium Development Goals will also require enhanced cooperation and results-oriented collaboration between international and regional organizations. Turkey has therefore encouraged deepened relations between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the United Nations system, as well as with other relevant international and regional organizations. We firmly believe that further cooperation with the United Nations will undoubtedly help the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to reach its goals.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to join others to express my delegation's thanks and gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his valuable and comprehensive report, contained in document A/59/303, on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, in which he spoke very clearly and methodically about the areas of cooperation that exist between international organizations.

My delegation, which is chairing the Group of Arab States during the month of October, would like to inform the General Assembly that the League of Arab States has forwarded to the Secretariat a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States", which will soon be circulated to all delegations. The draft resolution expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for actions he has taken to follow up the implementation of the proposals made in meetings between bodies of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies. The draft resolution calls on the secretariats of the two organizations to work in accordance with their respective competencies to increase the pace of their cooperation with one another in order to achieve the purposes and principles of the

Charter of the United Nations and to enhance their ability to benefit their common interests and goals in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields.

The draft resolution also calls for increased cooperation between the specialized agencies of the United Nations and the League of Arab States in such priority sectors as energy, desertification, technology and water resources. It also underscores the need to hold general meetings between the United Nations and the League of Arab States every two years, as well as joint sectoral meetings once every two years between their respective agencies in order to study and consider priority areas for development in the Arab States.

We express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as in the past.

Allow me now to speak on behalf of the delegation of Tunisia.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the great importance it attaches to cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. We also renew our call for enhanced coordination between the two organizations and for the strengthening of consultative mechanisms. In that connection, we express our appreciation for the continuing work being carried out by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa and the members of his Office with the African Union in order to implement numerous initiatives to make it possible for African countries to respond effectively to conflict-resolution efforts and to promote development programmes on the continent. There is no doubt that the successful initiatives of the United Nations in connection with establishing and developing the new African Union's structures, such as the Peace and Security Council, merit our gratitude and appreciation.

My delegation would also like to express its satisfaction with the ongoing consultations between the staffs of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference with regard to political, social, economic and humanitarian issues. Those consultations focus in particular on the situation in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Sudan, as well as on the prevention of conflict and combating terrorism. Given the importance of the subjects of those consultations and the direct effect they have on international peace and security, we call for the expansion and diversification of such cooperation to include many other fields.

Tunisia, which has the honour to host the regular session of the Arab summit, would like to welcome the progress made in the cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. That close and multilateral cooperation will enhance the abilities of the two organizations to face the challenges of peace, security, development and social progress. Representatives of 26 departments, funds, agencies and programmes of the United Nations participated with the representatives of 19 institutions of the League of Arab States in the eighth general meeting between the League of Arab States and the United Nations. That general meeting gave impetus to the cooperation that is taking place on joint projects. It also served to underscore the importance of cooperation between the two organizations in the area of conflict prevention and other fields of common interest.

My delegation would also like to express its appreciation for the advanced forms of cooperation that exist between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie. We welcome the fact that the tenth Summit of la Francophonie, which will take place on 20 November in Ouagadougou, will focus on solidarity for sustainable development. We hope that the Summit will lead to the fruitful result of supporting development efforts in the countries that, solely or partially, speak the French language, especially in the developing countries of Africa.

Mr. Ferreira (Sao Tome and Principe): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Angola, Cape Verde, Brazil, Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe, members of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

CPLP was founded on 17 July 1996 and became a United Nations observer in 1999. Since then, the Community has been consolidating its presence, influence and recognition at international level.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries brings together 240 million people in eight countries and four continents. Its member States, which are spread to the four corners of the world, also belong to regional organizations such as the European Union, the African Union, MERCOSUR, the Organization of American States, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and others, where they play an active role. Despite that fact, they decided to form another organization, the CPLP, based on a common language and cultural heritage.

In general, the main goals pursued by the CPLP include the establishment of close political dialogue and cooperation among its member States, the defence and promotion of the Portuguese language abroad and the methods of its teaching in CPLP member countries, and active cooperation in the various fields connected with development and public administration.

Under its wide umbrella, over 50 specific groups in the eight member countries are carrying out intense activities with organizations as diverse the CPLP's Parliamentary Forum, Business Forum and the chambers of agriculture of the eight member States. Other CPLP activities include press and media workers' groups, the China-Africa Corporation Forum, the National Archives Forum, a CPLP women's conference, and an organization of criminal police directors, as well as many other CPLP organizations on a list that is growing every day.

The fourth Summit of heads of State of the CPLP, which took place in my country last July, approved a wide range of decisions and programmes, including an awareness-raising campaign on HIV/AIDS that involves well-known sport figures, a programme to combat malaria and a resolution on the establishment of centres to improve public administration. In addition, various provisions to facilitate the circulation of CPLP citizens among Community member States were approved, as was the endorsement of a project by the President of Brazil concerning the fight against hunger and poverty.

In the course of the year preceding the Summit, the CPLP played a role in the elections that took place in Mozambique in November 2003 and in Guinea-Bissau in early 2004. It also undertook the signing of cooperation agreements with various organizations and agencies of the United Nations, namely UNESCO, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture.

East Timor, the latest country to join the CPLP, has received particular attention from the other member States as a natural consequence of the urgent needs resulting from the difficult conditions associated with its independence.

Guinea-Bissau also deserves particular attention at this moment, given the political instability that the country has suffered in recent years. In the last three weeks, the CPLP has sent several missions to Bissau, not only to help with the national dialogue and reconciliation but also to determine the precise urgent needs to be met in helping to put the country on the path to stability. The CPLP is certain that the United Nations and the regional organizations to which Guinea-Bissau belongs will cooperate closely to rescue that country from a cycle of poverty and instability that needs to be broken.

In cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States and the Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. João Honwana, we are helping to rebuild confidence among all political players and the army. That action demonstrates that the CPLP has been staunchly applying the rules of multilateralism and cooperating with the United Nations.

Document A/59/231 is based on provisions of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the Organization. A draft resolution we have submitted requests the commencement of formal cooperation between the United Nations Secretary-General and the CPLP Executive Secretary. We wish to formalize our role and widen cooperation with the United Nations by contributing to development and international security. I would therefore like to conclude by kindly requesting the Assembly to adopt by consensus that draft resolution, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking countries". I request Member States to join the list of sponsors of the draft resolution, which will be circulated in a few days.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of a group of States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Ukraine. On 15 September 2004, in Astana, Kazakhstan, those countries signed an appeal to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) partners.

We attach particular importance to the further enhancement and improvement of the cooperation between the United Nations and international and regional organizations, including the CIS. Such

interaction should be built up in strict conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of the universal nature of the Organization, while duly taking into account the comparative advantages of regional and other organizations. The scope of that cooperation is very broad, ranging from the prevention and settlement of conflicts to providing assistance for social and economic development, combating HIV/AIDS, eradicating poverty and disease and countering organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

Such cooperation is becoming particularly important in the light of the task of combating international terrorism, which has recently become increasingly acute and requires increased collective efforts on the part of all members of the international community.

We believe that the current practice of holding regular meetings between high-level officials of the Secretariat and leading regional organizations is extremely useful, and we would support its continuation.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, of which our countries are active members, plays an important role in the context of the subject now under discussion. We note with satisfaction that, as a regional mechanism under Chapter VIII of the Charter, the OSCE has established close and fruitful interaction with the United Nations in a whole range of key areas, first and foremost those related to security and the settlement of regional conflicts.

Guided by a desire for constructive cooperation within the OSCE and for the strengthening of its role in the present-day European security architecture, and in furtherance of the Moscow statement by the Presidents of the States members of the CIS of 3 July 2004 regarding the state of affairs in the OSCE, the member States of the CIS, meeting on 15 September 2004 in Astana, Kazakhstan, adopted an appeal addressed to their OSCE partners. The main idea of the document is that today's circumstances require additional steps to enhance the effectiveness of that pan-European organization.

First, we propose to reinforce OSCE activities to combat international terrorism and eradicate its root causes. In that connection, a necessary step is the improvement of OSCE mechanisms, in particular by augmenting the budget and staff of its antiterrorism unit. We support the implementation in full, throughout the organization's region, of the provisions of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council at Maastricht in 2003. We also believe it is important to continue the constructive participation of the OSCE in the resolution of regional conflicts throughout its area within the framework of its existing negotiating processes and mechanisms. CIS member States, which signed the appeal to OSCE partners on 15 September 2004, are ready to make a practical contribution to implementing the decisions adopted by the OSCE in that important part of its activities.

The unique capacity of the OSCE in the military-political field must be improved and fully exploited. To do so, it is important to speed up the entry into force of the 1999 Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is the cornerstone of the European security system. It is also necessary to carry on work on the adaptation of the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. A topic for serious discussions could be the issue concerning military doctrines of participating States. We stand for enhancing the role of the Forum for Security Cooperation and for preserving its autonomous status and its right to take independent decisions.

It is important to give full expression to an economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. The mechanisms established and the documents adopted in those areas do not fully ensure the proper implementation of existing agreements. There is also a need to promote more balanced OSCE activities in the humanitarian sphere.

We believe it necessary to move away from the practice of limiting OSCE field activities to monitoring political situations, giving priority attention instead to specific project activities in its reform process. Such activities should be carried out transparently through the mechanisms of the secretariat and the specialized institutions of the OSCE, taking into account the needs and requirements of the receiving States.

For the OSCE to be fully able to implement the task initially set for it — to be a forum for broad and equal dialogue on the most significant issues — it is necessary to overcome artificially created functional and territorial imbalances in the work of the

organization. The Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted by the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, is a good basis for further promotion of its partner cooperation with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations. It is important to make full use of the potential of that cooperation in the interests of the entire international community.

Mr. Kryzhanivsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUUAM).

At the outset I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations (A/59/303). The basis for such cooperation was envisaged in the United Nations Charter, but it was only in the early 1990s that the international community started to pay particular attention to this issue. Since then, regional organizations have been increasingly recognized as an important instrument in international efforts aimed at achieving United Nations goals, especially in the area of peace and security. Indeed, during the past decade we have witnessed many encouraging examples of that kind of cooperation, for example, the efforts of NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the Balkans, or the contribution of African Union and the Economic Community of West African States to the settlement of conflicts in Africa.

Given the scope and complexity of the challenges facing the international community, GUUAM firmly believes that enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations or arrangements is absolutely indispensable in dealing with many of them. The important role that can be played by regional organizations, primarily in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts, but also in other areas, is widely acknowledged.

GUUAM is encouraged by the Secretary-General's efforts towards the creation and promotion of strategic partnerships and cooperative arrangements with regional organizations. In that process due account should be taken of the comparative advantages and strengths of individual organizations in order to make joint action to address the current challenges more effective and complementary. Of equal importance is the provision by the international community of assistance to strengthen the capacities of regional organizations in the respective areas of their activities.

The establishment of institutionalized cooperation frameworks and channels of communication is necessary for the coordination and efficiency of joint actions. In that regard, GUUAM attaches great importance to the high-level meetings of the Secretary-General with regional organizations. We are encouraged by the fact that the Secretary-General has asked the respective United Nations departments to lead the implementation process on the recommendations of the fifth high-level meeting, as well as to develop practical follow-up plans for discussion during the next meeting. Taking into account the broad range of issues that have been previously discussed in those forums, we believe it would be appropriate that at the sixth meeting between the Secretary-General and regional organizations, to be convened in mid-2005, due attention be given to the current exchange of views, as well as to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. GUUAM looks forward to its participation in that meeting.

The granting to GUUAM of observer status in the General Assembly last year was an important initial step in the development of its mutually beneficial cooperation with the United Nations, with the aim of achieving shared goals and principles. GUUAM is interested in such cooperation and is ready to consider its contribution to activities of concern and importance to the United Nations in various areas.

Since its establishment seven years ago, in addition to issues of economic cooperation, GUUAM has been expanding its activities to many other spheres, including the security field.

Strengthening regional security in all spheres of activity and combating international terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking are among the main objectives of the GUUAM, as defined in its charter. A number of concrete projects in those areas are now under development.

The GUUAM welcomes the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee's (CTC) endeavours to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of information between regional organizations and is actively participating in CTC meetings with representatives of such organizations. Let me reiterate that the GUUAM, which strongly believes that the United Nations constitutes the best possible framework for our collective efforts in fighting terrorism, stands ready to

further facilitate its cooperation with the Organization in this field.

With respect to today's debate, the GUUAM attaches particular importance to the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and European regional organizations and arrangements. We support the further strengthening of interaction between the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, OSCE and the Council of Europe in the maintenance of peace, security and stability on the European continent, the promotion of respect for the rule of law and human rights, and the facilitation of cooperation in the economic and environmental areas.

In that regard, I would like to express the concern of the GUUAM over the continued lack of progress in the settlement of protracted conflicts in post-Soviet territory, namely in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia; Nagorny Karabakh, Republic of Azerbaijan; and the conflict in the Republic of Moldova. They are causing suffering to millions of people and threaten to destabilize the situation in the entire OSCE region.

The GUUAM calls on all relevant international organizations, including the United Nations and the OSCE, to take decisive steps aimed at the final settlement of those conflicts, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We strongly believe that efforts to that end, including the full implementation of the relevant decisions of the OSCE summits and ministerial meetings, should be among the major priorities for the OSCE.

Mr. Tanko (Nigeria): Nigeria is delighted to participate in this debate. It is gratifying to note that the African Union, as the successor organization to the erstwhile Organization of African Unity (OAU), enjoys a healthy relationship and cooperation with the United Nations. We are confident that this and other efforts of the United Nations will lead to improved cooperation and coordination between our two organizations, particularly in the management of conflict, poverty eradication, disease control and sustainable development.

The problem of persistent conflicts in various locations in Africa and the increasing difficulty of finding solutions to them continue to pose serious challenges to the United Nations and the international community. While we acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made and the successes achieved to date, it is our belief that a great deal still has to be done.

In that regard, Nigeria and, indeed, the African Union commend the United Nations for its consistent engagement in crisis management and peacekeeping in Africa. We note the fundamental change that has taken place in the perception and concept of peacekeeping operations, which now encompass issues such as the establishment of requisite institutions to ensure the rule of law, the enforcement of human rights, the reintegration of troops and internally displaced persons, as well as the rehabilitation of infrastructure in countries emerging from conflicts. Accordingly, we call on the United Nations to increase its present level of collaboration and assistance to regional and subregional bodies in those areas. That would enhance the capacity of those bodies in their efforts to maintain peace and security on the continent.

We welcome the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. This is indeed a reflection of the determination of the United Nations to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union and other regional organizations in the quest to maintain peace and security in Africa. In that regard, the appointment of special envoys by the African Union in areas where the United Nations is operating is another important step in the cooperation between the United Nations and the AU. We believe that the use of regional strategies involving regional actors in the resolution of conflicts in Africa has been of great importance to the African Union. That approach is consistent with Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, which recognizes the relevance and role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that connection, it is gratifying that the Constitutive Act of the African Union has — appropriately — upheld Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, which enjoins Member States to adopt the strategy of the pacific settlement of disputes through negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration, under the umbrella of regional agencies or arrangements.

Consequently, the African Union, through its Peace and Security Council, is now more focused and proactive in its approach to the maintenance of peace and security. That strategy has been greatly enhanced through the establishment of institutional cooperation for conflict prevention, management and resolution. We therefore reiterate our commitment to resolution

57/48, adopted in 2002, which stresses the need for closer cooperation and coordination between the African Union and the United Nations. The resolution also calls upon the United Nations system to continue to support the AU on an ongoing basis, in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement between the two organizations.

It is also noteworthy that the resolution calls for assistance in the area of the training of troops and the standardization of equipment for peacekeeping duties. We believe that there is an urgent need to further enhance this process, in order to put an end to the recurrent conflicts in Africa through additional joint efforts between the United Nations and the subregional and regional organizations in Africa. Such efforts and cooperation, in our view, will bring lasting, much-needed peace and sustainable development to the continent. Accordingly, we call on the United Nations to cooperate further with subregional and regional organizations of the continent to address the root causes of conflicts and the factors that exacerbate them.

In that regard, we commend the assistance extended to the African Union by the United Nations in the establishment of its Peace and Security Council, African Standby Force and Military Staff Committee. We also welcome the assistance and cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly in the area of peacekeeping and peace-building in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. It is gratifying to note that ECOWAS has been able to address complex humanitarian issues in the subregion with the active cooperation of the United Nations.

Nigeria endorses the memorandum of understanding and programme of work between ECOWAS and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. We appreciate the fact that the programme of work involves joint activities in the areas of good governance, security-sector reform, electoral assistance, unemployment among young people and the control of the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

We reiterate our commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted in July 2001. We call for increased United Nations assistance to the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to achieve the implementation of the Programme of Action.

While we welcome the progressive decrease in the production and transfer of landmines in the subregion, it is regrettable that landmines continue to impede the development and security of peoples, especially in African States emerging from conflicts. In that connection, we call for the continued support of the United Nations in demining the subregion.

Our quest for global peace and security will prove unsuccessful unless we intensify our efforts to eradicate poverty and disease and to control the HIV/AIDS pandemic. All those diseases and constraints continue to pose grave inhibitions and challenges to our developmental efforts. However, we appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the contribution of the international community in combating those scourges in Africa.

We reiterate our commitment to the Framework for Action adopted at special Summit of the African Union held in Abuja, as well as to the document adopted at this year's African Union Summit at Addis Ababa. It is worth noting that the Framework calls on African countries to intensify their efforts and to mobilize resources for the prevention, care and treatment of people infected by HIV/AIDS. There is consequently a need for the United Nations system and the international community to support Africa in its determination to overcome those challenges. In our view, the need to fight those scourges is no longer an option but an imperative act of prudence and good conscience, if the labour force in Africa is not to be wiped out.

While we welcome the positive response of the international community to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), it is, however, necessary to stress that urgent measures must be taken to translate existing promises into action. Since the objectives of NEPAD are intricately linked to the Millennium Development Goals, we believe that achieving both would constitute a rescue operation for the African continent. Indeed, in our view, neither of those objectives or goals can be achieved without the other. We therefore urge the United Nations system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the international community to increase their support for projects identified under NEPAD.

In conclusion, we note with satisfaction that as part of its efforts towards enhancing cooperation

between the United Nations and regional organizations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is forging closer cooperation with the African Union, especially in the implementation of NEPAD. We also note with appreciation the Secretary-General's decision to establish the Advisory Panel on International Support for NEPAD. We expect that that cooperation will result in the deployment of additional resources. We believe that both Africa and the international community stand to gain from such collaboration in addressing the challenges that confront the continent.

Mr. Sircar (Bangladesh): I would like to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on the manner in which you are steering the work of this session. I would also like in particular to commend the Secretary-General for his reports, which provide an in-depth account of the growing cooperation in various fields between the United Nations and other organizations. The reports succinctly address the institutional efforts aimed at strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and other organizations.

The Charter of the United Nations provides a role for regional and other organizations in the maintenance of peace and security in their respective regions. The United Nations has a mandate to intensify dialogue with regional organizations. That includes exploring areas where those organizations constitute the ideal complement to the activities of the United Nations. Effective cooperation should be based on comparative advantages, leading to complementarity of efforts.

Cooperation among international organizations is crucial in an increasingly globalized world. The Millennium Declaration recognized the need for the United Nations to work more closely with parliamentarians in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues. The Deputy Secretary-General appropriately stated in her recent remarks at the 2004 parliamentary hearing that parliamentarians could do much to help meet those global challenges. We have to explore how parliaments could best assist in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Better cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) would have a constructive effect on the future of the United Nations. We have to work hard and reinvigorate our commitments to find modalities to enhance the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation.

The state of world affairs has posed more complex and massive tasks for the United Nations. Some of those tasks are to eradicate poverty, ensure peace and security, protect the environment and combat terrorism. National parliaments could contribute a great deal to bettering the lives of people around the world. The role of regional organizations is important in the managing of issues at the regional and national levels. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience from which the United Nations could greatly benefit by way of effective partnership and cooperation. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations should be guided towards strengthening the capabilities of regional organizations.

We are encouraged to learn that the substantive relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been constantly expanding, in particular since the IPU was granted observer status in the General Assembly, in 2002. That cooperation now covers a growing number of activities of mutual interest to both organizations. The organizations pursue the common goals of world peace, security and development: they are mutually reinforcing. The Secretary-General's report has appropriately pointed out that IPU plays a significant role at the global level by organizing numerous events on the sidelines of international conferences and summits. In particular, those events provide a legislative framework conducive to the implementation of the commitments that have been made.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), another organization of parliaments, has 49 member States throughout the world. That organization is firmly committed to establishing global cooperation aimed at achieving peace, prosperity and a variety of other goals around the world. I had the opportunity to preside over the forty-ninth Annual Plenary Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in Dhaka in 2003. The Dhaka conference set the tone for partnerships with the objective of attaining the Millennium Development Goals. I believe that the CPA has a wealth of knowledge and accumulated experience to share with the United Nations. That opportunity, if pursued by the CPA in the future, would provide genuine and mutually reinforcing benefits.

The late President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh initiated the idea of forming the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with the overarching objective of forging broad-based cooperation among nations. That organization has achieved tremendous success in the field of socio-economic development and cooperation on information communication technology. Next year, we will mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of SAARC. We aspire to expand our collective agenda of peace, progress and development in South Asia and to seek links with other subregional and regional groups. We strongly believe that an institutional relationship between SAARC and the United Nations would strongly support the realization of the objectives of the Organization.

The practice of democracy is indispensable for maintaining economic stability and social progress. Bangladesh has come a long way in strengthening democracy and making it an integral part of our national life. We have introduced the system of a neutral caretaker Government to oversee our parliamentary elections. The past three general elections in the country have been held under that system. Our democratically elected Parliament is the focus of the decision-making process. Notably, Bangladesh has been a unique example, in that for the past 13 years, both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition have been women.

The United Nations must be the forum for collective responses to the common problems of the Earth. The Organization can greatly benefit by drawing upon the experiences of a wide variety of regional and international organizations. We seek to foster the building of a global parliament that is more efficient in its decision-making process, open to a larger number of voices and more capable of taking effective decisions.

The report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (A/58/817 and Corr.1) provided some recommendations on engaging parliamentarians more systematically in the work of the Organization. Those recommendations merit serious consideration. We also believe that the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will produce comprehensive proposals aimed at renewing the United Nations and making it a more legitimate and more effective instrument for mounting a collective response to the threats of our age.

The second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments will, in all probability, be held in September 2005. It is our conviction that that event will provide an occasion for building the will necessary to better define the political and operational responsibilities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in matters relating to the promotion of peace and security, democracy, human rights and gender equality.

In conclusion, the United Nations is enduring a period of significant stress. Ironically, despite the efforts of the Organization and of others, war, conflict, poverty, hunger and malnutrition have remained global scourges that have destroyed the lives and aspirations of millions of the world's people. We firmly believe that all nations — big or small, weak or powerful — need the United Nations as much as the United Nations needs them. It is only by combining our endeavours and by uniting our resolve that we will be able to attain our objectives of peace, security, development and stability. That is our commitment, and we must honour it.

Mr. Dube (Botswana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe — as well as the candidate country Madagascar. My statement will focus on item 56 (s), that is on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community.

On behalf of the SADC member States, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/59/303) on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

Since its establishment as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference in 1980, SADC has evolved as a dynamic organization capable of adapting its institutional framework, its focus on intervention and its strategic priorities to the continuously changing regional and international political, social and economic environment. SADC has made good progress in restructuring itself to better serve the needs of its people by embarking on projects and programmes that seek to make a positive and indelible mark on the lives of millions of people in the region.

In that context, I should point out that a regional indicative strategic development plan was adopted in

2003 as a key policy framework for the operationalization of SADC's common agenda and for the attainment of deeper and broader levels of economic integration and social development in the region. The plan focuses on a wide range of issues, including peace, security, democracy, governance, HIV/AIDS, gender, economic integration and trade, information communication technology and science and technology, among others. A number of areas of intervention aimed at regional cooperation and integration have been identified for implementation over the next 15 years. An overall goal, areas of focus, key strategies and broad targets have been established for each intervention area. Those targets are in line with the Millennium Development Goals and with internationally agreed development parameters.

At the SADC summit held in August 2004 in Mauritius, the Indicative Strategic Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (ISPO) was launched to serve as an enabling instrument for the implementation of the SADC developmental agenda embodied in the regional indicative strategic development plan. The core objective of the Organ is to create a peaceful and stable environment within which the region can endeavour to realize its socio-economic objectives.

However, a key factor for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the goals set by the Organ is the availability of resources. These resources will be an important factor in the success of both the regional indicative strategic development plan and ISPO. SADC relies on contributions from its member States, but also on financial and technical assistance from its partners in the international community. Increases in sources of funding are essential for an effective realization of the goals and the achievement of the targets that we have set.

I do not want to dwell on the various problems facing the SADC region. However, for the sake of emphasis, let me highlight the unprecedented HIV/AIDS crisis that has placed our region in a state of severe vulnerability. Indeed, the SADC region is the epicenter of the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Statistics, we continue to observe, reflect a magnitude of the epidemic that has not been registered in any other part of the world. The majority of the countries in the region remain the worst affected by any standards.

SADC, for its part, however, has demonstrated, through the Maseru Declaration and plan of action, its priority commitment to combating the epidemic. While SADC member States will continue to implement national and regional policies on HIV/AIDS, we solicit the continued support and assistance of the United Nations system and the international community in addressing this scourge.

SADC commends United Nations Member States and the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for their development cooperation with SADC, which SADC highly values. It is in this spirit that SADC initiated the process of obtaining observer status within the United Nations. Allow me to express our deep appreciation to United Nations Member States for the support extended for granting observer status to SADC. The draft resolution adopted by the Sixth Committee earlier this month (A/C.6/59/L.5) will strengthen and consolidate cooperation with the United Nations to appropriately promote and enhance peace, stability, socio-economic development and the broader principles of the United Nations.

Mr. Petkov (Bulgaria): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to wish you the best of success in your responsibilities.

It is a special honour for me to address the General Assembly today, as I represent the Bulgarian chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE comprises States in Eurasia and the Euro-Atlantic area and is a regional security arrangement under the terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We are committed to guaranteeing peace and stability as a pan-European organization, and we fully cherish the United Nations vision of effective multilateralism.

I would like briefly to draw your attention to the biennial draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. It provides a comprehensive overview of the work of the organization. It shows the wide scope and depth of our cooperation, both in the field and on thematic issues.

The draft resolution, which is under discussion among delegations, underlines OSCE core activities in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. It demonstrates how we are adding new capabilities designed to tackle new threats and challenges to security, policing, anti-trafficking, border management and counter-terrorism.

These capacities have developed quickly and effectively since OSCE-United Nations cooperation was last reviewed in 2002.

Counter-terrorism deserves special attention. The shocking terrorist attacks in Madrid, Beslan and elsewhere demonstrate that none of our citizens can be safe without joint and coordinated global action against such brutal acts. In our opinion, a decisive reform of regional security mechanisms is needed. We have to build up an effective network of technical and logistical assistance among our organizations and provide it with a specific counter-terrorism edge. This network could thus respond instantly to the need to combat terrorism. We are working closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee and in the spirit of the relevant United Nations resolutions. We intend to take further practical steps and to assist OSCE States in enforcing the international legal standards enshrined in the relevant conventions and resolutions.

I would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to our increased focus on conflict resolution. In the past two years, the OSCE has devoted significant efforts to achieving progress in resolving conflicts and diffusing tensions in the OSCE area. A good example of practical cooperation in that context is Kosovo, where the OSCE is a key pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Europe has a large number of highly capable organizations that are equipped to cope with a broad spectrum of security challenges. The more successful we are, the greater the chances for peace and prosperity and the lighter the burden of the United Nations. The OSCE is constantly seeking to improve its political and operational contacts with regional and international organizations.

Two weeks ago, we all rejoiced at the historic and peaceful elections in Afghanistan. This was also an historic occasion for the OSCE, as it was the first time it launched an out-of-area operation. An election support team assisted the Afghan authorities and the United Nations in the election process. This demonstrates the flexibility and effectiveness of the OSCE, its commitment to assisting its partners in cooperation as well as its effective cooperation with the United Nations. We are now considering further ways to share OSCE principles and experience with interested States and regions.

There are two other areas of OSCE-United Nations relations that I would like to highlight. The first is our cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on economic and environmental issues. The second is our work in the political and military areas. In this case, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition complement and even elaborate on United Nations work in these fields.

In the next United Nations debate on OSCE-United Nations cooperation, to be held two years from now, I am sure that we will be able to report on achievements in other areas such as anti-trafficking, policing, and border management and security. These are growth areas for the OSCE, for which we hope to draw on United Nations expertise.

We are living in a rapidly changing world in which regional, subregional and international organizations have to rapidly adapt their collective response to threats that put our global stability and regional security at stake. The OSCE is doing its part in this, but we think we can do even better. That is why we are considering how the OSCE can be made more effective in carrying out its diverse activities and made more relevant as a forum for high-level political dialogue. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Solomon Passy, put forward a package of ideas for transformation of the organization in recent correspondence to his colleagues from OSCE participating States. The main thrust of these ideas is to raise the political profile of the OSCE and to increase the efficiency of its organs.

The OSCE and the United Nations speak a common language and have similar priorities in addressing contemporary threats to security. We have provided input to the United Nations High-level Panel studying global security threats, and we look forward to its recommendations.

Let us set our agendas for the future in a harmonized approach to speed up reforms of old structures, to defend the rule of law and fundamental human rights and to work for peace.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.